



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Fact Sheet

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 Section 205: Improved Performance Metrics for Health Care Provided by Department of Veterans Affairs

On August 7, 2014, President Obama signed into law the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-146) ("Choice Act"). Technical revisions to the Choice Act were made on September 26, 2014, when the President signed into law the Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-175). The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) goal continues to be to provide timely, high-quality health care for Veterans.

Section 205 requires VA to ensure that scheduling and wait time metrics or goals are not included as factors in employee performance evaluations or when calculating whether to pay performance awards.

Background

In order to improve VA's ability to deliver high-quality health care to Veterans, Section 203 calls for VA to ensure scheduling or wait-time measures are not used as elements, standards or factors in evaluating performance of facility directors and other senior employees. Additionally, VA will work to restructure the way health care providers offer care and how their performance is reviewed so that they are empowered to provide quality services, and their performance is reviewed accurately and consistently.

Performance Plan Changes

VA medical facility directors and other senior employees' performance plans and evaluations will be monitored to ensure that these plans are based on the quality of care received by Veterans. Performance measures based upon patient wait times have been eliminated from the evaluation process. Employees' performance rewards will not be incentivized by scheduling or wait time measures, therefore employees will not be financially incentivized by these metrics. Measuring performance based on health care outcomes, will ensure that employees' focus will remain on the delivery of care to Veterans by providers and facilities. VA will use patient feedback, patient satisfaction surveys, and benchmarking with industry-wide health care measures to determine if quality of care is improving.

Financial Performance Incentives

Veterans Health Administration (VHA) senior executive performance awards were suspended for fiscal year 2014 in an effort to ensure accountability across VHA. Performance goals are being refocused to ensure that measures, such as scheduling and wait time metrics, could not be manipulated for financial gain. The 14-day access measure was removed from all employee performance plans to eliminate any incentive for inappropriate scheduling practices or behaviors. In the course of completing this task, over 13,000 performance plans were amended. The new approach will ensure that any performance rewards truly reflect the level of health care delivered to Veterans.

Timeline

These performance changes will be implemented no later than October 30, 2014.